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US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



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**C O P Y**

**REILLY TAR & CHEMICAL CORPORATION**

Mr. H. L. Finch

Mr. P. E. White

FIRE - REFLUX STILLS - #13, 14, 15  
V. G. 292A

St. Louis Park, Minn.

August 22, 1967

1967-8  
1967-9  
1967-10  
1967-11  
1967-12

*J.E.Riley*  
This was  
emergency  
repair. Will you  
please affix  
work order if  
necessary  
*J.W.M.*

During the blowdown of #14 Still on August 12, 1967, a leak was noted. At the time we felt it was a leak in the vapor line. We cleared the insulation from around the vapor line but found no leak. We did, however, find a leak in the steam blowdown line on top of the stills. We repaired this and put the still back in service on August 17, 1967.

Again during blowing, at about 9 a.m. on August 18, 1967, we had a vapor release which became ignited. The flames were quite severe at the time but were easily extinguished with a dry chemical fire extinguisher. Also, #13 and #15 Stills began to smoke. Number 15 Still did flame up but was easily extinguished. Number 13 Still only smoked and charred the insulation around the thermo couple. The fire department was not called.

Investigation revealed that the thermo couple well on #13 Still failed and vapors thus escaped through the conduit to the outside of #14 Still as well as the two adjacent stills, #13 and #15. The actual fire was not severe but did damage the insulation.

We are replacing all four thermo couple wells in our four stills with 304 stainless. The existing wells were regular pipe wells, which are against present standards. Also, as recommended by Reilly Lab Engineering Department, we are installing vapor plugs between each still and between the instrument and first still.

The actual loss of insulation and thermo couple wire should be about \$200.00. The total work order including installation of stainless wells on all four stills should be about \$500.00.

Very truly yours,

*P. E. White*

P. E. White

PER: *[initials]* CC: Mr. C. F. Lasher - Indpls.  
Mr. H. J. Boyle - Indpls.

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